

Theories of change

1. THE INDIVIDUAL CHANGE THEORY: A better world will come through transformative change of a critical mass of individuals, their consciousness, attitudes, behaviours, and skills. [Methods: investment in individual change through training, personal transformation/ consciousness-raising workshops or processes; dialogues and encounter groups.]
2. THE HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS THEORY: A better world emerges out of a process of breaking down isolation, polarisation, division, prejudice and stereotypes between/among groups. Strong relationships are a necessary ingredient for a better world. [Methods: processes of dialogue; networking; relationship- building processes; joint efforts and practical programs on substantive problems.]
3. THE WITHDRAWAL OF RESOURCES THEORY: Some social problems require vast amounts of material and human capital. If we can interrupt the supply of people and goods to the system that maintains the problem, it will collapse and our vision will be realised. [Methods: campaigns to cut off funds/national budgets; conscientious objection and/or resistance; embargoes and boycotts.]
4. THE REDUCTION OF VIOLENCE THEORY: Peace will result as we reduce the levels of violence perpetrated by combatants or their representatives. [Methods: cease-fires, creation of zones of peace, withdrawal or retreat from direct engagement, introduction of peacekeeping forces/interposition, observation missions, accompaniment efforts, promotion of nonviolent methods for achieving political/social/economic ends.]
5. THE ROOT CAUSES/JUSTICE THEORY: We can achieve our social change vision by addressing the underlying issues of injustice, oppression/exploitation, threats to identity and security, and people's sense of injury/victimisation. [Methods: long-term campaigns for social and structural change, truth and reconciliation; changes in social institutions, laws, regulations, and economic systems.]
6. THE INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT THEORY: Our vision will be secured by establishing stable and reliable social institutions that guarantee democracy, equity, justice, and fair allocation of resources. [Methods: new constitutional and governance arrangements/entities; development of human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption; establishment of democratic/equitable economic structures; economic development; democratisation.]
7. THE POLITICAL ELITES THEORY: Our vision will be achieved when it is in the interest of political (and other) leaders to take the necessary steps. Our efforts must change the political calculus of key leaders and groups. [Methods: raise the costs and reduce the benefits for political elites of maintaining the problem while increasing the incentives for the vision or solution; engage active and influential constituencies in favour of our vision; withdraw international support/ funding.]

8. THE GRASSROOTS MOBILISATION THEORY: “When the people lead, the leaders will follow.” If we mobilise enough opposition to this problem, political leaders will have to pay attention. [Methods: mobilise grassroots groups to either oppose war or to advocate for positive action; nonviolent direct action campaigns; use of the media; education/mobilisation efforts; organise advocacy groups; dramatic events to raise consciousness.]

9. THE ECONOMICS THEORY: As a politician once said, “It’s the economy, stupid!” People make personal decisions and decision makers make policy decisions based on a system of rewards/incentives and punishments/sanctions that are essentially economic in nature. If we can change the economies associated with the problem, we can bring about change. [Methods: use of government or financial institutions to change supply and demand dynamics; control incentive and reward systems; boycotts.]

10. THE PUBLIC ATTITUDES THEORY: Many social injustices are partly motivated by prejudice, misperceptions, and intolerance of difference. We can promote our visions for a better world by using the media (television and radio) to change public attitudes and build greater tolerance in society. [Methods: TV and radio programs that promote tolerance; modeling preferred behaviour; symbolic acts of solidarity/unity; dialogues among groups in conflict with subsequent publicity.]

11. THE POLITICAL CHANGE THEORY: Democratic processes are underpinning by the theory that changing political representation will make a difference to the issues that people care about. This is dependent on the degree of responsiveness of the democratic system (eg. proportional representation allows a voice for minority views) and the functioning of democracy (eg. domination by big money). [Methods: political organisation in or with political parties or groupings; influence from outside by mobilising voters; alliances around campaigns in the run up to elections].

12. Add your own...